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Economic and Social Council

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For action

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Second regular session 2003
15-19 September 2003
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Provisional annotated agenda and organization of work

For the second regular session of the Executive Board to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 September 2003

Summary

The present document contains the provisional annotated agenda and organization of work for the second regular session of 2003 of the Executive Board. The annex contains the proposed timetable and organization of work for the session.

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Provisional Agenda

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Annotated provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director

The President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director will make introductory statements.

2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/11]

The provisional agenda has been structured in accordance with relevant Executive Board decisions, in particular the programme of work for 2003 adopted by the Board at its September 2002 session (E/ICEF/2002/8, decision 2002/19). The proposed timetable and organization of work, which has been shared with the Bureau, is contained in the annex.

Decisions will be adopted as the discussion of each agenda item is concluded. However, if required, time will be set aside for Board members to consult informally on all outstanding draft decisions.

3. Decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council: oral report

This oral report focuses on the issues discussed and decisions taken at the 2003 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council that have particular relevance to UNICEF.

4. Report on implementation of the modified system for allocation of regular resources for programmes

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/P/L.21]

The Executive Board endorsed the modified system for allocation of regular resources in 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1, decision 1997/18). By the same decision, the Board requested the Executive Director to provide a comprehensive report on the experience in implementing the modified system for its review in 2003. This report responds to that request.

5. Medium-term strategic plan for the period 2002-2005: financial plan and related recommendation

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.7]

Based on the MTSP approved by the Board (E/ICEF/2001/6, decision 2001/22), the financial plan and related recommendation are presented annually for Board approval. Within this framework, the Board is also requested to approve the establishment of a funded reserve for after-service health insurance.

6. Summaries of mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

[For information – E/ICEF/2003/P/L.22-E/ICEF/2003/P/L.28]

Prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), these reports specify, inter alia, the results achieved, lessons learned and the need for any adjustments in the country programmes. The Board is to comment on the reports and provide guidance to the secretariat, if necessary.

The reports cover the following regions: Eastern and Southern Africa (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.22); West and Central Africa (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.23); the Americas and Caribbean (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.24); East Asia and the Pacific (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.25); South Asia (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.26); Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.27); and the Middle East and North Africa (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.28).

7. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Recommendations for funding from other resources without recommendations for funding from regular resources

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/P/L.15-E/ICEF/2003/P/L.17]

The secretariat is submitting for Board approval three proposals for funding from other resources without recommendations for funding from regular resources. They are Tajikistan, the Gulf Area subregional programme and Oman (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.15-E/ICEF/2003/P/L.17, respectively).

(b) Recommendation for additional resources for approved country programmes

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/P/L.18]

The Executive Board is requested to approve additional regular resources for approved country programmes that lack sufficient funds to cover the programme period due to revised planning levels for regular resources allocations.

(c) Recommendation for expenditures against write-off and overexpenditures due to revaluation

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/P/L.19]

The Executive Board is requested to approve funding from regular resources to cover expenditures against write-off.

Submitted to the Executive Board for information, the "round-up" paper (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.20) summarizes the recommendations for regular resources and other resources programmes for 2003.

8. Water and sanitation in the context of the medium-term strategic plan: oral report

The secretariat will present an oral report on its activities in water and sanitation in the context of the MTSP.

9. UNICEF response to malaria: oral report

The secretariat will report orally on actions taken by UNICEF to help prevent malaria in countries in need.

10. UNICEF involvement in trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights: oral report

As requested by the Board at its first regular session of 2003 (E/ICEF/2003/9 (Part I), paragraph 84), the secretariat will report on UNICEF involvement in TRIPS, in particular in the health sector.

11. Final report on the use of the funds for UNICEF support to the Special Session on Children

[For information — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.12]

In response to Executive Board decision 2001/21, the secretariat will present the final report on the use of the funds for UNICEF support to the General Assembly Special Session on Children.

12. UNICEF collaboration with the corporate sector: oral report

As requested at the first regular Board session in January 2003, and deferred until the present session, the secretariat will present an oral report on UNICEF collaboration with the corporate sector.

13. Private Sector Division: financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 2002

[For information — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.8]

The Executive Board will have before it for review the PSD financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 2002.

14. Interim financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 2002, the first year of the biennium 2002-2003

[For information — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.9]

This document contains the interim financial report on the accounts of UNICEF for 2002, the first year of the biennium 2002-2003. It is presented to the Executive Board for information.

15. Report on internal audit activities in 2002

[For information — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.11]

This report responds to the Executive Director's proposal at the 1997 second regular Board session to issue an annual report on UNICEF internal audit activities for Board consideration.

16. Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

[For information — E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.10]

As an ongoing practice, UNICEF has been submitting a report to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, to advise the Assembly as to the measures that the organization takes to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors. This document reports on the steps taken or to be taken in response to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the UNICEF accounts for the biennium 2000-2001. The focus of the report also relates to those recommendations that at the time of the previous report were either not implemented or only partially implemented.

17. Programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2004

[For action — E/ICEF/2003/13]

The Executive Board will consider the issues to be addressed at its sessions in 2004 and its programme of work, including the allocation of items and organization of work.

18. Other matters

It was decided that under this agenda item, the Board would continue discussions on its working methods, focusing on field visits, joint meetings and documentation, which began informally at its second regular session of 2002. A report on the subject (E/ICEF/2003/12) has been prepared by the secretariat to facilitate the deliberations. The Board also may consider discussing any other issues that it finds timely and appropriate.

19. Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

The Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board will make concluding remarks, followed by the closure of the session.

Annex

Proposed timetable and organization of work for the second regular session of the Executive Board, 15-19 September 2003*

Monday, 15 September	a.m.	*Item 1*	Opening of the session: statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Board
		Item 2	Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization
		Item 3	Decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council: oral report
		Item 4	Report on implementation of the modified system for allocation of regular resources for programmes
	p.m.	*Item 4 (cont'd)*	Report on implementation of the modified system for allocation of regular resources for programmes *(continued)*
Tuesday, 16 September	a.m.	*Item 5*	MTSP for the period 2002-2005: financial plan and related recommendation
	p.m.	*Item 6*	Summaries of MTRs and major evaluations of country programmes
Wednesday, 17 September	a.m.	*Item 6 (cont'd)*	Summaries of MTRs and major evaluations of country programmes *(continued)*
		Item 7	Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation: (a) Recommendations for funding from other resources without recommendations for funding from regular resources (b) Recommendation for additional regular resources for approved country programmes (c) Recommendation for expenditures against write-off and overexpenditures due to revaluation
	p.m.	*Item 8*	Water and sanitation in the context of the MTSP: oral report
		Item 9	UNICEF response to malaria: oral report
		Item 10	UNICEF involvement in TRIPS: oral report
Thursday, 18 September	a.m.	*Item 12*	UNICEF collaboration with the corporate sector: oral report
		Item 13	PSD: financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 2002
	p.m.	*Item 11*	Final report on the use of the funds for UNICEF support to the Special Session on Children
		Item 14	Interim financial report and statements for the year ended 31 December 2002, the first year of the biennium 2002-2003
		Item 15	Report on internal audit activities in 2002

Friday, 19 September	a.m.	*Item 16*	Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
		Item 17	Programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2004
	p.m.	*Item 18*	Other matters
		Item 19	Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

* When consideration of an agenda item concludes ahead of the allocated time, the next item on the agenda will be taken up for consideration and the timetable adjusted accordingly.

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United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Second regular session 2003
15-19 September 2003
Item 18 of the provisional agenda*

Working methods of the Executive Board

I. Introduction

1. During 2002, the Executive Board held informal discussions on its overall working methods, including arrangements for field visits. These issues were again discussed in 2003, when the need to revise the terms of reference[1] for the field visits became apparent, in order to take into account the question of joint field visits with members of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP). These issues were discussed by the Bureau following the annual session of 2003, when some delegations expressed interest in further discussion on the Board's working methods at the second regular session of 2003.

2. The present report has been prepared by the secretariat to facilitate those discussions by: (a) summarizing some of the points raised about the Board's overall working methods, as a way of facilitating any discussions on these issues; and (b) providing updated guidelines for the field visits which take into account recent decisions by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board on joint field visits,[2] and for which the Board's approval is sought.

II. Working methods of the Executive Board: summary of issues raised

3. The following issues have been raised by various delegations during a series of informal discussions of the working methods of the Executive Board, including a presentation by the President of the WFP Executive Board, at the annual session of

* E/ICEF/2003/11.

[1] The original terms of reference for field visits were approved by the Executive Board in decision 1992/32.

[2] Decisions 2003/15 (DP/2003/26) and 2002/23 (DP/2003/2).

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2002, on a process launched by the WFP Board to improve its functioning and working methods. The points are summarized below, together with comments by the secretariat on progress made to date in those areas.

4. The members of the **Bureau** play a vital role in facilitating the work of the Executive Board by coordinating consultations within and between their respective regional groups, and by working with the secretariat between sessions on ongoing issues of concern. The President also maintains contact with the Presidents of the Executive Boards of the other funds and programmes with regard to joint meetings and related issues.

5. **Informal consultations** have been cited by Board members as an important forum for discussing issues, and as helping delegations to prepare for the formal Board sessions. The secretariat agrees completely that informal consultations are key to briefing delegations, listening to their concerns and building consensus, as seen by the successful consultations and briefings (for each regional group) on the recovery policy held prior to the annual session of 2003. Similar consultations are under way to discuss the issue of allocation of regular resources prior to the second regular session of 2003. In addition, prior to each session, the secretariat normally organizes pre-session briefings for each regional group to discuss the issues on the agenda. When possible, the secretariat will make advance copies of relevant documents available for the consultations. Alternatively, delegations will be provided other information materials if the final document is not ready.

6. The timely availability, in languages, of high-quality **documentation** continues to be an issue of concern, as does the large number of documents produced and the burden this places on delegations, especially those with small Missions to the United Nations. The secretariat has been addressing the issue through several avenues:

(a) The secretariat continues to work closely with the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) to ensure that all documents are submitted by the assigned slot date and meet all requirements for length (a maximum of 8,500 words/16 pages per document). Waivers are required for documents that exceed that requirement, and for 2003, waivers have been requested only for certain mandatory financial reports and for the annual report of the Executive Director. If documents are submitted on time and are within the page limit, DGACM issues them in languages four weeks prior to the start of the session;

(b) Advance copies of documents, in their original language versions, have been made available on the UNICEF extranet site at least six weeks prior to each session. Plans are under way to post the advance copies on the UNICEF web site (www.unicef.org);

(c) To avoid overburdening delegations with written reports, throughout 2002 and 2003 the secretariat has been delivering a series of oral reports on a variety of topics. Because they do not have the long lead time of written reports, the oral reports include more up-to-date information. They are also in line with the Secretary-General's proposals to streamline reports contained in his report, *Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change* (A/57/387). The oral reports generally have been well received, although delegations have requested that the secretariat provide advance information on relevant policy issues. Copies of relevant material will be made available prior to each session;

(d) Each year, at the second regular session, the Executive Board adopts its programme of work for the coming year, based on a draft prepared by the secretariat which in turn is based on previous Board decisions, requests from delegations and consultation with the secretariat and Bureau. The draft programme also indicates whether the reports will be written or oral. This is discussed and can be amended by the Board. In addition, after each session, the secretariat discusses with the Bureau any requests for additional agenda items or reports that resulted from that session.

III. Proposed guidelines for the field visits of the UNICEF Executive Board

7. The proposed guidelines have been prepared taking into account comments made by delegations during the Executive Board's discussions on field visits in 2002 and 2003, and the recent decisions of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board on joint field visits. They are intended to be a flexible frame of reference for preparing field visits, in the context of the particular features of the relevant UNICEF country programme and the programmes of the other agencies taking part in joint field visits.

A. Selection of countries

8. In principle, there shall be two field visits each year, including one joint visit, if agreed upon by the Bureaux of the three Executive Boards (UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP). If there is a joint visit, the members of each Executive Board will make separate visits to projects of their respective agencies.

9. The countries to be visited each year shall be selected at the end of the previous year by the Bureau, based on information provided by the secretariat and with the concurrence of the countries concerned. The destinations for joint field visits shall be agreed upon by the three Bureaux, in consultation with the respective secretariats.

B. Purpose and scope of the visits

10. The purpose of the visits is to: (a) allow Board members to observe UNICEF field operations and the work of the United Nations country team; (b) help them to understand the relationship of the UNICEF country programme to national development priorities, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), bilateral development assistance and other relevant frameworks; (c) provide insight into the implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies at field level; and (d) discuss the impact and results of UNICEF programmes with government and non-government counterparts at national, local and community levels, if possible.

11. The team shall study and review all facets of programming and programme delivery in each country visited, including advocacy and policy dialogue with the Government; the programme approach adopted; decentralization of financial and administrative authorities; decentralized field operations at subnational levels; working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the principle and practice of flexible response to emerging issues and changing situations; social mobilization

and programme communication; and involvement and working relationship with the United Nations country team and other development partners, etc. The visit shall highlight the dynamics of UNICEF programme operations.

12. Issues to be covered may include:

(a) The country programme cycle (situation analysis/Common Country Assessment (CCA), preparation of country programme, midterm reviews) and results achieved against objectives;

(b) Effectiveness of communication between UNICEF and national and local counterparts, the United Nations country team and bilateral partners;

(c) Comparative advantages, impact, results and sustainability of UNICEF-supported programmes;

(d) Emergency response capacity;

(e) Decentralization;

(f) United Nations system coordination;

(g) Relevance of Executive Board and decisions;

(h) Linkages with the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, the CCA/UNDAF, the Millennium Development Goals and other relevant frameworks.

13. The UNICEF Representative shall have the opportunity to suggest additional issues.

14. The team shall visit a representative sample of programme/project interventions and shall spend as much time as possible outside the capitals.

C. Team contacts

15. Within the framework for the field visit, the team shall meet a representative sample of participants in UNICEF programme operations, including:

(a) UNICEF field staff (international and national Professionals, General Service);

(b) Members of the United Nations country team;

(c) National counterparts at national, subnational and local levels;

(d) National decision makers who work in areas relevant to UNICEF cooperation;

(e) Representatives of civil society who work with UNICEF (e.g., mass media, religious leaders, community-based organizations, professional organizations, children's groups);

(f) International and national NGOs;

(g) Donors, including bilateral cooperation agencies, the World Bank, etc.

16. The visits shall, to the extent possible, be conducted as working visits for study and dialogue, with courtesy and protocol calls kept to a minimum.

D. Participation

17. Each team shall comprise six members of the Executive Board, two from the Western European and Others group of States, with one each from the African, Asian, Central and Eastern European, and Latin American and Caribbean groups of States. In selecting team members, the regional groups of the UNICEF Executive Board should bear the following criteria in mind. The nominee should:

(a) Not be a national of the countries to be visited;

(b) Be familiar with UNICEF work, i.e., an official who has been dealing with UNICEF matters, whether from the capital or the Permanent Mission to the United Nations;

(c) Be reasonably certain of his/her participation in subsequent meetings of the Executive Board.

E. Joint visits

18. Joint visits should focus on themes of common interest to the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, such as the UNDAF, the work of the United Nations country team on the Millennium Development Goals and/or other relevant cross-cutting themes for discussion at subsequent joint meetings of the Executive Boards, while at the same time allowing members of the Boards to visit projects of their respective agencies.

19. The countries to be visited by the joint teams will be selected by the three Bureaux, in consultation with the respective secretariats. Because the joint visits can place a considerable burden on the host Governments, this will be taken into account in deciding on the destinations and duration of the joint visits. The Bureaux and secretariats will consider the possibility of rotating secretariat responsibility for coordinating the joint visits.

F. Financing

20. Members from industrialized countries shall bear all their expenses, while the expenses incurred by members from developing countries shall be borne by the UNICEF support budget.

G. Length of the visit

21. The team will spend at least five working days in each country visited, and shall visit not more than two countries per visit.

H. Preparations and communications

22. In advance of the visit, the field offices concerned shall provide all the background materials required such as the schedule of the visit, the situation analysis, the programme plan of action for the year and a summary of the UNDAF,

striking a balance between providing information needed to render the visits meaningful and not overburdening team members with excessive documentation.

I. Briefing, debriefing and trip report

23. Prior to the team's departure, UNICEF headquarters may provide a briefing on policy background and issues, as appropriate.

24. All visits will begin with a thorough briefing by the country office and an informal question-and-answer session, followed by first-round meetings with government counterparts and visits to project sites.

25. The last day of each visit will be devoted to debriefing, including a round-table discussion with government counterparts and other partners, and an overall review of the visit.

26. The participants shall write a brief informal report for discussion at the subsequent session of the Executive Board. The team shall designate a rapporteur who will work with the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board in drafting the report. During the visit, appropriate time shall be allocated and organizational plans made for the preparation of the report, which should be completed in draft form before the end of the visit.

J. Travel arrangements

27. The UNICEF secretariat will make necessary travel arrangements, as required, in accordance with United Nations standards.